



THE METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT  
OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

**Date:** June 18, 2020  
**To:** All Metropolitan Employees  
**From:** Jeffrey Kightlinger, General Manager  
**Subject:** Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Over the past several weeks, there have been many conversations between Chairwoman Gray, Board Members, employees and the executive management team on the steps we should take individually and collectively to look for opportunities to make meaningful changes and foster a culture of equity and inclusion.

Five suggestions have emerged that I consider to be the basic elements of an initial workplan.

They are:

- Create a forum for conversation and discussion by inviting the employee resource groups and bargaining unit leadership to designate one or two members to serve on a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Council. The Council will function as a forum for dialogue and discussion on how to improve current policies, practices and the employee experience at Metropolitan.
- Retain the services of a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion consulting firm to perform a thorough culture assessment and provide a roadmap for improvement. The assessment would include an employee survey and stakeholder interviews, and would be grounded in behavioral science, social science and organizational behavior as key building blocks for sustained change. This will help us better understand where we are as an organization with respect to diversity, equity and inclusion to focus resources and energy on practical goals.
- Improve sensitivity and awareness by retaining the services of a firm to provide mandatory bias training. Recognizing our biases and promoting understanding of how those biases contribute to perceptions can help improve working relationships and communication.

- Resume and broaden outreach to promote careers in the water sector. This includes restarting outreach for recruitment that was interrupted due to COVID-19 (e.g. apprenticeship program recruitment and water sector HR forum) and expanding outreach throughout the six-county area to attract a diverse pool of candidates and ensure that all communities are aware of and understand the career opportunities at Metropolitan.
- Promote diversity, equity and inclusion in Metropolitan's business practices and planning initiatives. This would build on our current business outreach program for procurement and contracting and extend to other Metropolitan programs that serve the community to improve access and opportunities for underserved or underrepresented populations.

I will be scheduling a meeting with employee resource group leadership and bargaining unit leadership shortly to discuss these five basic elements of an initial workplan. I have directed Shane Chapman, Chief Administrative Officer/Assistant General Manager, to lead and organize this important effort and apply resources as needed to keep us moving forward together. If you have any concerns, questions or suggestions, please contact Shane at [schapman@mwdh2o.com](mailto:schapman@mwdh2o.com).

We have a great opportunity for change, and I intend to work with all of you to embrace this sense of urgency, to listen to your ideas, and take action to promote inclusion and strengthen Metropolitan's commitment to its employees and those we serve.